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RUEHPOD/AMEMBASSY PODGORICA 1063

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PODGORICA 000254

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/RPM AND EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MW](#)
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT AUTHORIZES MONTENEGRIN PARTICIPATION IN
INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

REF: (A) POGORICA 252 (B) PODGORICA 176

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The Montenegrin parliament adopted the Bill on the Use of the Montenegrin Military in International Forces and Peacekeeping Missions with a 44-19 vote. Montenegrin soldiers will now be able to volunteer for deployment to overseas peacekeeping missions. Despite opposition criticism, the governing coalition has taken another big step toward its goal of Euro-Atlantic integration. END SUMMARY.

Second Time the Charm

¶2. (U) During an October 8 session broadcast live, the Montenegrin Parliament adopted the Bill on the Use of the Montenegrin Military in International Forces and Peacekeeping Missions Abroad. The bill was adopted with 44 yea votes from the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), Social Democratic Party (SDP), as well as the Democratic Union of Albanians, Democratic Alliance in Montenegro, Albanian Alternative (AA) and Bosniak Party; 19 deputies from the opposition Movement for Change, Serbian List, Socialist People's Party, Liberal Party, People's Party and Democratic Serbian Party voted against the bill. At the June 28 session, the bill failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority. In accordance with the Constitution, a simple majority was sufficient for adoption this time (REF B).

¶3. (U) The law provides that Montenegrin troops sent on peacekeeping missions be recruited on a voluntarily basis. The Parliament, following a proposal of the Council for Security and Defense, would have to approve any use of troops overseas.

Those "For" and "Against" Have Their Say

¶4. (U) Dragan Soc of the People's Party (NS) criticized the bill and added that his party advocates that Montenegrin troops be sent on missions under UN mandate. Vasilije Lalosevic of the Socialist People's Party (SNP) stated that his party was strongly against the bill. He described the bill as unclear and criticized the preparation of troops last August for

participation in peacekeeping missions prior to the bill's adoption. He also criticized a team of doctors preparing to be deployed abroad, although legislation had not been adopted to allow non-combat participation in such missions. He also accused the military authorities of exerting pressure on soldiers to voluntarily apply to go on missions. "Our children will become cannon fodder."

¶5. (U) Srdjan Brajovic, deputy of the Movement for Change (PzP) stated that PzP would not support the bill. He criticized the bilateral agreements Montenegro signed with the USG -- SOFA and Article 98 -- arguing that they violated "the International Rome Statute which Montenegro is a signatory to." PzP argued that the decision on the engagement of troops abroad should be taken via public referendum.

¶6. (U) Dobrilo Dedejic, spokesperson for Serbian List (SL), said that today's vote showed that peacekeeping missions are organized under an American umbrella, which makes those countries which send troops potential targets for various radical elements. Dedejic added "you will agree that we have an evident problem of Wahabbis in Montenegro today."

¶7. (U) Ivan Kalezic, a ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) deputy elaborated on the need for adoption of the bill, calling it another important step toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

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Comment

¶8. (SBU) This law and the other legislative actions this week, significantly step up the GoM's commitment to achieving eventual NATO membership. Podgorica has already signed a Transit Agreement with NATO and is making contributions to the GWOT, including more than 1500 small arms and 200,000 rounds of ammunition donated to Afghanistan. End Comment.
MOORE